

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

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On August 14, 2003, the northeastern United States experienced the largest power blackout in the nation’s history, an event that affected a region encompassing 50 million residents across six states and two Canadian provinces.

The exact cause of the initial equipment failure that triggered the automatic shutdown of hundreds of interconnected energy facilities remains unknown at this time. Also unknown are the full economic implications, which have been compared to those of a major snowstorm: short-term disruption and some losses, most of which can and will soon be made up.

Of greater concern than the transitory economic impact, however, is how the public health and safety infrastructure was affected during the blackout – how were public safety, law enforcement, emergency services and communications links disrupted, and what alternatives were available to the impacted government entities.

As recently as 2001, regions of California were threatened with blackouts or brownouts during the state’s energy crisis. While the causes were different, the challenges were the same: how to protect and serve the public during a major power failure.

MOTION

MOLINA	_____
YAROSLAVSKY	_____
KNABE	_____
ANTONOVICH	_____
BURKE	_____

The recent northeastern blackout once again compels us to ask this question with renewed urgency.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Administrative Office, in conjunction with the Departments of Health Services, Internal Services, Public Works, Sheriff's and Fire Departments to report back to the Board in 30 days with an analysis of Los Angeles County's preparedness to respond to a similar power failure and its ability to maintain continuous operation and public service for the County's 10 million residents should a comparable event happen here.

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